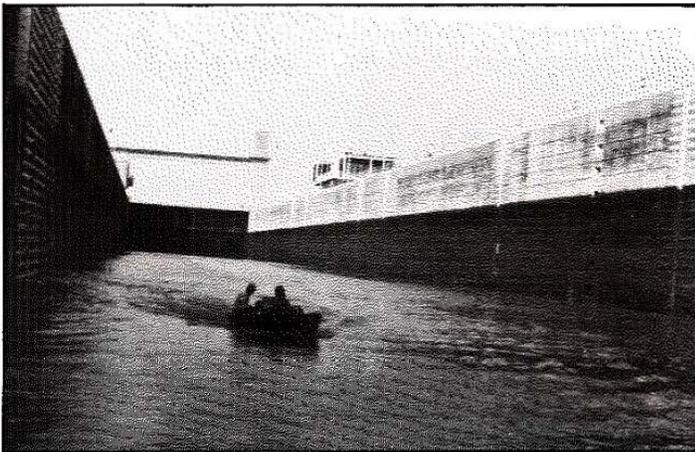


Scots n' Water

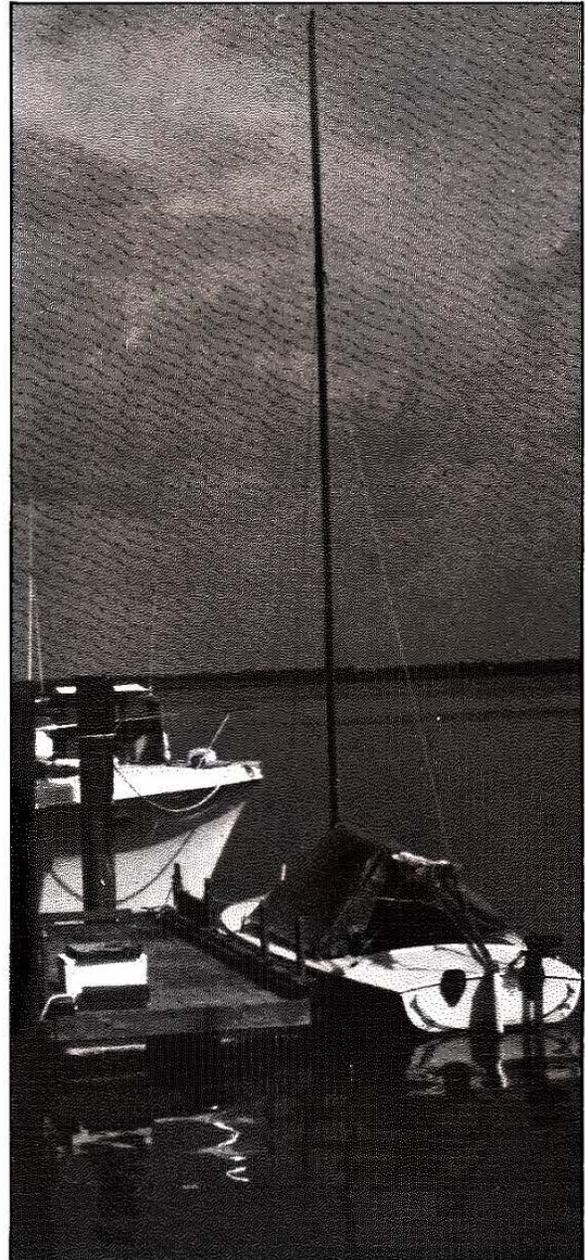
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Pittsburgh to St. Petersburg



Dream Cruise In a Scot



DREAM CRUISE LONGEST IN FLYING SCOT

Marilyn and Harry Filemyr

Few sailors go through life without dreaming or thinking of winning a big race or sailing across an ocean or around the world. How many Flying Scot owners think of spending seven weeks and traveling over 2500 miles in the comfort of their Scot? How many marriages could make it through an adventure like this?

Sailing from McKeesport, PA. to St. Petersburg, FL may not sound as glamorous as crossing the Atlantic, but sailing the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers is an adventure of its own. The 94 bridges, 21 locks, constant barge traffic and river currents keep one busy as you head for the Gulf of Mexico. From New Orleans to St. Petersburg there is a lot of good sailing in semi-protected waters. Then a quick dash across the Gulf from Lighthouse Point to Cedar Key.

Thirty or more years ago while Harry Filemyr was paddling canoes down rivers in Boy Scouts, a dream was being implanted in his mind. Growing up in the "Heartland" he was fascinated by river lore. Doing construction work on locks brought him closer to some of these mystiques of "River Life." In the late '50s he even thought about building a small steam paddle wheeler and cruising from Chicago down the Mississippi.

In his construction business he used a lot of stone quarried in Tennessee which was shipped by river. Years before, he was offered a trip accompanying a shipment of stone down the Tennessee River and up the Ohio River which he had to refuse because he was

too busy. But the dream was still alive.

In the summer of 1986, a construction project brought Harry to the realization that it was time to take a break from business. The time had come to take a few months off and make this cruise down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers.

The NAC in Gulfport, Mississippi was coming up so Harry asked Marilyn if she'd like to go. Sounded like fun to her, so it was time to start making plans. Then Harry said, "How about if we sail there?" Not thinking much about it Marilyn agreed. Then it struck her. When Harry ordered the marine radio she really knew he was serious, but shared his spirit of adventure now realizing the NAC had nothing to do with it.

Harry had thought for years about how he would equip and pack Flying Scot 270 for such a trip. They set a date for leaving in two weeks and proceeded with preparations. Marilyn's main project was building the custom boom tent which Harry designed. The camping gear was brought out and inspected. Storage boxes were built and the floor boards / seat bunks were made. This was not to be a lightweight cruise and the power of an old Citation Class Genoa and a trusty British Sea Gull were made ready.

This was meant to be an economy class trip. Marilyn said it was just like going camping and both were impressed by the volume of things you could store in the Scot hull. Harry compares it with going back-packing but not having to hike and carry everything. Lots of canned food (in-



Harry and Marilyn with a map of their cruise.

cluding Spam) was packed under the floor boards while staples such as Bisquick, oat meal, rice, powdered milk and eight gallons of water were put in plastic milk jugs.

As word of their trip spread among sailing friends at Deep Creek, reaction was mixed. Many of the men thought it was great and were maybe a little envious. One doubter wondered, "When will you shower." Marilyn's reply was, "If we were worried about showers we'd go on a cruise boat." This was a way to celebrate their 30th anniversary.

On a Monday evening in early August "Harm's Way" was launched from a ramp on the Youghiogheny River just off the Monongahela River in McKeesport, PA. A TV news crew was there as they packed and departed. At 7:30 pm, as they sailed past "The Point" in Pittsburgh, Harry was shocked as the people on an excursion boat were either having a very happy, "Happy Hour," or were cheering them along on their adventure.

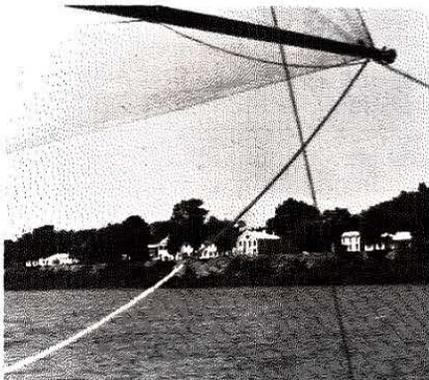
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Dream Cruise:

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Cruising a river is not quite like crossing the ocean. To the doubters Harry would say, "If we get tired of it we'll just pull out and find a way home." As it turned out, Marilyn said there were only two days where we noted any boredom in the logbook.

The first week they cruised down the Ohio toward Cincinnati. The Ohio is a tame river, more like sailing a string of lakes because of its numerous locks. The current is minimal and the scenery is beautiful. Even when you know there are towns on the shoreline, seldom do you see much of them. The trees come right to the bank of the river valley as it twists and turns toward the Mississippi. This also causes some awful sailing conditions. In a typical August there are 14 days of calm. When it blows, the wind usually comes from the southwest which is straight up the river valley. The British Sea Gull did a lot of pushing.



Sailing wing and wing past Rising Sun, Indiana.

The Ohio did reveal many wonderful old river towns. Gallipolis was a well preserved (not restored), homey, 19th century town. River history was a large part of Harry's fascination in the trip. At times they felt as if they were explorers from another century on this "historic pilgrimage." Everywhere they went they were treated very well.

About a week into the voyage Marilyn admits to the need for an attitude adjustment. Harry knew from the start that to reach New Orleans by Labor Day they would have to average 50 miles a day. This would mean ten hours a day

of travelling and Marilyn hadn't put this into perspective until they were on the water. As the trip progressed, they enjoyed the long hours more and more. After dinner, nothing seemed more relaxing than a few more hours on the river. Harry found the evening travel a joy as he studied and was mesmerized by the lights of the river. Through the constant twists and bends, the shoreline navigation lights, the stars and the city lights constantly changed.

They almost always kept one of their bed boards in position across the seat for a navigation and galley table. Seldom did two hours go by that they didn't make an entry into the logbook.

Meals were basic but very tasteful, prepared in the open on the Coleman stove. It wasn't Spam every night for dinner and blueberry pancakes never tasted as good for breakfast. There were quite a few meals in the towns as they stopped to get supplies. More, than Marilyn had originally imagined.

Every night was spent aboard the boat, often in a nice cove or inlet. The floor boards came up to form a bunk across the seat and with some new air mattresses, sleeping was always comfortable. The boom tent worked fine, although Harry has some changes in mind. All things considered, things were very comfortable on the Flying Scot.

The locks on the Ohio proved to be no problem. Most of the large tug tows were going up stream so the locks were usually empty going down and waits were minimal. Harry used a marine radio to



Green channel marker in the current on the Mississippi.

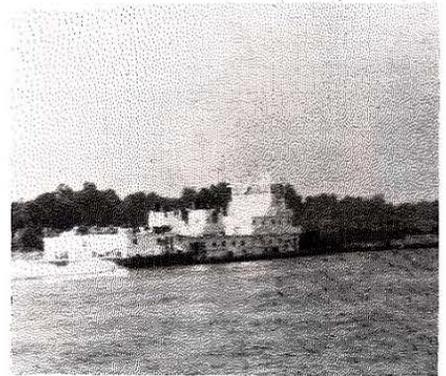
notify lock tenders ahead of time and everything went smooth.

Part of the daily routine included a river swim with a bar of soap. The Ohio was quite clean and nice while the Mississippi was much browner in color from the sediment it carries. Neither river showed much sign of pollution.

One of the few times they saw sailing on the Ohio was at Louisville. There they witnessed some women racing in prams and some small cruisers racing with full crews.

Barge tows were not a big problem because you watched for them and stayed out of their way, especially on bends. Because of their limited maneuverability and large size, the rules of the road were simple.

One of the more enjoyable days of sailing was as they ran into the Mississippi from the Ohio. In a good 15 to 20 knot blow Harry and Marilyn covered over 100 miles from Joppa, Illinois to New Madrid, Missouri. All but the first



Tow boat pushing 20 barges of coal.

13 miles was under sail, including an hour of running with the spinaker. That was all Harry's arms could hold on for even though they noticed barge crews watching them with binoculars. Sailing the "26-mile bend" near New Madrid at night was a wild experience.

From the Ohio, it was eleven and a half days and 861 miles to New Orleans. The winds on the Mississippi were much better as there was a lot more reaching. The larger genoa helped a lot in these conditions. With upward of a six knot current helping from behind the distance went by very fast.

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Dream Cruise:

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The locks of the Ohio disappear on the Mississippi as it is open water all the way to New Orleans. Planning a stop was important because if you went past, you just kept going.

Amazing, were the sand bars on the Mississippi. Some of these were miles long and miles wide. They would act to filter the water so that on the back side the water would be very clear. It was a pleasure to swim and bath in these pools, which are larger than many of the lakes where Scots sail.

The Mississippi was something else to see. There was very little sign of civilization in most parts. There are large levies and flood basins to help control flooding, but this moves everything back five miles from its shore except at major cities. Even the logging camps are all on boats so they can pull out.

Throughout, the Filemyr attitude was to do this because they wanted to, and never did they feel obligated to finish their planned cruise. They just downright enjoyed it. One tends to think of rivers as being a lot straighter than they actually are. There's seldom a dull hour. Every day was different. The rivers changed, the scenery changed, and the conditions changed. The "Heartland of America" was something to behold.

Barges running downstream always had the right of way. On the Mississippi this was particularly important because in some of the currents and bends, the water would accelerate faster than the boats. This leaves them with little steerage as they slip through the bends in the current. Barges going up the river always wait for the downstreamers to clear the dangerous areas. One way to stop a barge is to park it on a sand bar gently.

The barges made very little waves but the prop wash and hydraulic jump from the power of the tugs would create a wave as much as six feet high. This would quickly die down but you don't want to get too close.

They did meet some other



Heading up the Chickasaw to Memphis at dusk with the Memphis Queen coming toward us.

cruisers on the way. Chris Boyd had left Pittsburgh and was rowing to New Orleans in a Kyak. The Scot was quite a luxury by comparison.

As it turns out, Harry claims the Flying Scot to be the perfect river cruiser. Keelboats have many troubles running aground. Large motorboats also have navigation problems and it is hard to find large quantities of fuel for long distances. Houseboats have a large surface to catch the wind and are also very impractical. Motorboat props also tend to get fouled a lot. With the outboard

motor, centerboard, and hull strength of the Scot, the Filemyrs felt very safe and never worried about running aground. They experienced none of the "Horror Stories" shared by other cruisers.

Memphis was the first big city on the Mississippi. Here they enjoyed a day at the Mud Island Recreation Center including a great meal. Memphis was a beautiful city and one of the big city highlights.

In Greenville, MS they stopped at the Greenville Yacht Club for a beer and shower. It was their first

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Dream Cruise:

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real shower since leaving almost three weeks earlier. In the bar they talked to a crop duster pilot who later "saluted" them in his plane as they traveled on.

Donaldsonville, Louisiana was one of several small town highlights. Here they pulled over at an abandoned waterfront district only to find some "good old boys" sippin' some whiskey in their pickup truck. Asking for directions to the nearest grocery store, they were given a ride to Donaldsonville's biggest and best, five miles away. Hospitality like this was common.



The "good ole boys" from Donaldsonville.

On the other side, Harry tells a story about a preacher who suggested carrying firearms. After all his family were "River People" and he knew there were some bad ones. As a man of God he warned, "The Lord looks after those who look after themselves." He proceeded to give Marilyn a cross to bless their voyage.

From Vicksburg, MS to Natchez they enjoyed another 100 mile day. Before a 10 - 15 knot northerly, they ran all day including an hour with the spinnaker. This part of the Mississippi was quite desolate so they pushed all day just to get through it.

One of the big treats along the Mississippi became the daily search for ice cream. With temperatures usually in the 90s, nothing tasted or felt so good in the throat. Every day or two there was also a supply of ice to be found. Immediately some beers would be iced down or a dinner cocktail would toast the day.

They arrived in New Orleans right on schedule for Labor Day.

They sailed into the Southern Yacht Club on Lake Ponchartrain and enjoyed a great weekend of southern hospitality. All this despite the fact that they were in the middle of the GYA Lipton Cup Competition. This is the GYA Club championship sailed in Flying Scots with one team and revolving crews from each GYA Club. The Filemyrs saw first hand the ritual of the Lipton Cup. A spectator fleet of sixty to seventy boats surround the course with many clubs having large flagships to hold their people. With all the happenings, Harry and Marilyn were treated with great respect and enjoyed themselves immensely.

Sailing the rivers had been the main goal of the cruise from the start. At this point it would have been easy to call it quits and head home. Without a second thought, the cruise continued into the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi Sound. To Harry this was the "icing on the cake." River travel was interesting and neither of them would have missed it for anything and were glad they had done it. However, once was enough and there would be no desire to do it again. The Gulf would just prove to be an enjoyable cruise for the next couple of weeks. There was no pushing on or time table for places to be.

Now there would be more sailing everyday, still taking time to fish, swim, and enjoy hiking on some of the islands. As they worked east of Biloxi, MS each island became a little bit more beautiful and fuller.

Fresh caught fish became more regular for dinner. One shrimp boat donated a dish pan full of assorted fish including several pounds of Rock Shrimp. Not worth wholesaling for the fishermen, the Rock Shrimp were like little lobsters and quite a delight to Harry and Marilyn.

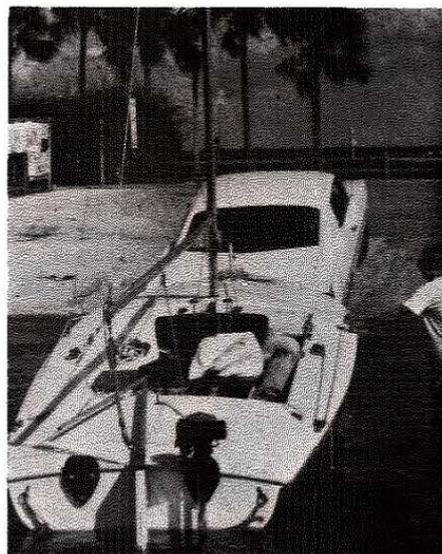
They worked their way down the coast to Lighthouse Point enjoying every day. Then the decision came to sail across to Pine Pt., which would take them the farthest offshore. That evening they got hit with a storm which lasted a good part of the night. Sailing under the genoa alone

with all the gear, the helm was out of balance and quite heavy. They never felt endangered but it was quite a battle for a few hours. They finished crossing to Pine Pt. and proceeded south to Tarpon Springs and on to St. Petersburg. "Harm's Way" 2530 mile and 48 day voyage was over. They spent several days at the transient dock facilities while searching for a used car and trailer to head back home to Maryland. Here they met Steve Haugen who had sailed a 24 foot wooden sloop down the Mississippi from Milwaukee.

Looking back on the trip, Marilyn concludes, "It wasn't always fun, but it was never dull. We learned a lot about rivers, weather, sailing, sea gulls, and about ourselves. I can't think of a better way to cement a 30 year marriage although I suppose it's not for everyone!"

Both Harry and Marilyn say the dream is not over. They plan to continue with thoughts about returning to St. Petersburg and resuming the cruise around Florida and up the East Coast. For now its back to work and on with life. Both agree it was important to take a few months off and enjoy such an experience.

"We were not trying to prove anything by this trip...It was just something we wanted to do...If we ever felt an obligation to do it, it just wouldn't have been as much fun." So Harry and Marilyn conclude a part of their dream.



Harm's Way leaves the water after 48 days and 2530 miles. Steve Haugen lends a helping hand.